

NETWORK



Tempe
Community
Council

A publication of Tempe Community Council
Connecting those in need with those who care

SPRING 2007

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Coming Events Spotlight

Tempe Mayor's
Disability Awards
THURSDAY, 3 PM
APRIL 26, 2007
Tempe Library Program Room
3500 S. Rural Road, Tempe

CIS Breakfast
FRIDAY, 7:30 A.M.
APRIL 27, 2007
Hatton Hall

TCC Volunteer Reception
& 35th Anniversary Celebration
THURSDAY, 5-7 PM
MAY 2, 2007
Tempe Library Program Room
3500 S. Rural Road, Tempe

TEMPE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

TCC's campaign to grow the Tempe Community Foundation (TCF) is underway!

✦ **Agreements** among TCC, the Arizona Community Foundation and City of Tempe were completed in March for TCC to officially assume the guiding role for TCF. The **brand new logo** from ACF shown on the right illustrates the new status of TCF as an affiliate fund (i.e., a permanent endowment fund with ACF to be used in perpetuity for human services in Tempe).



- ✦ The TCC Board has initiated a **"100 Guiding Lights"** campaign toward obtaining 100 donations to TCF by current and former TCC Board members. The goal is \$100,000 plus \$100,000 matching funds.
- ✦ The **DW GREEN** agency is making a huge contribution to the effort by preparing theme material for the campaign including brochures, graphics and even a video.
- ✦ The campaign will culminate in a TCF **"Hearts and Heroes"** event at Vestar's new Tempe Marketplace mall on November 4 of this year - more details soon!
- ✦ The **Tempe Leadership Class XXII** has adopted TCF as their project for this year and is raising funds for a donation statuary (similar to a "wishing well") to be situated at Tempe Marketplace mall.
- ✦ Lastly, TCF is a general purpose **endowment for human services in Tempe**. The interest this year from existing TCF funds, about \$6,000, will be infused for the first time into Agency Review resources. However, other donor interests are also welcome. For instance, Elsa Klock recently donated \$70,000 to the TCF family of funds to benefit youth at two City of Tempe multi-generational centers.

TEMPE KINSHIP CARE FAMILIES

927 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Tempe

According to Census 2000, 873 grandparents raising grandchildren resided in Tempe. In 2005, this number increased to 927 grandparents. Twenty-eight of Tempe's thirty-five census tracts have households where grandparents are responsible for their grandchildren, according to Census 2000.

In 2005, the Arizona Community Foundation (ACF) granted \$10,000 to Tempe Community Council in partnership with the City of Tempe to study and plan related to grandparents raising grandchildren. The project is related to the Communities for All Ages initiative of ACF.

When it was learned that other members of the family (e.g., aunts and uncles) are also assuming care of family children, the term “kinship care” came into use. The purpose of the Tempe Kinship Care Partnership Project was to document the actual barriers faced by grandparents raising children within the Tempe community and create options for addressing these needs.



Six Project Goals:

1. Create systems to promote and foster meaningful intergenerational connections.
2. Identify and contact those providing kinship care.
3. Identify the needs of those providing kinship care.
4. Implement support groups for kinship care providers.
5. Plan for meeting other kinship care needs identified from the focus groups.
6. Coordinate, implement and evaluate Tempe Kinship Care program.

Phase I - Focus Group Results

In Phase I, Project Coordinator **Karen Kurtz** facilitated three focus groups totaling 19 kinship care families to assess their needs for legal, financial, education, health care, emotional support, and social and recreation assistance. The focus group participants contributed a wealth of information, many expressing appreciation that someone cared enough about their struggles to ask. Here are the main findings from the focus groups along with a few participant comments:

Finding #1: Kinship caregivers experience a significant disruption to their lives and often feel isolated and invisible in the larger community.

- On the *rewards* of caring for the children - “Seeing the kids act like normal kids finally. They have been to hell and back and they understand that their life wouldn't be like it is now if their grandparent wasn't caring for them.” ; “Two of my grandkids were failing, now they are ‘A’ students”.
- On the *frustrations* of the care - “I'm 67 years old. I never thought I would be bringing up a child.”.

They have been to hell and back...their life wouldn't be like it is now if their grandparent wasn't caring for them.”

Finding #2: Other family members are often the most significant source of support for kinship caregivers. The parenting status of kinship caregivers can also be a significant source of conflict with other family members.

- “Have to be mom/dad/nana, everyone. There is just one of me.”
- “We have a frustration with the other set of grandparents. They don't recognize us as the parents. There is a struggle with who is calling the shots, especially with discipline. Whose rules apply? They want to be the kids' friends.”

Finding #3: The relationship with the biological parent of kinship care children is often a source of conflict and emotional turmoil for kinship care children and caregivers.

- Reasons grandparents have grandchildren: “Drugs” (most common); “Mother was in jail and the father wanted to put the child in foster care; “Son wanted to start a new family”; “Parental abuse – Grandson was with a stepfather for two years who beat him”.
- On feelings of children: “Mom and dad day is difficult for these kids.”; The other kids at school ask my grandson ‘is that your mom?’ He just hangs his head.”

Finding #4: The parenting issues faced by kinship caregivers are different and often more challenging than when they raised their children.

- “There is more responsibility now than I had with my own kids.”
- “Behavior issues from abuse the child has gone through. I’m learning to parent all over again with an ADHD child. Nothing sticks. I have to go over and over it.”

Finding #5: Though the need for kinship care services has been recognized at the State and local levels and services are available, there is no coordinated system of care serving kinship care families. Kinship caregivers must find their own way through a system that is often confusing, disconnected, and impersonal.

- “Nobody makes it easy. There is no central place for information.”
- It’s overwhelming when you don’t know where to go. I used to sit in the FRC parking lot and cry.”

“Nobody makes it easy. There is no central place for information.”

“Until just the other day, we didn’t know there was help with child care. The State will help reimburse.”



Finding #6: Uncertain legal status, limited or inaccurate knowledge about legal rights, and lack of support to go through the legal system keeps kinship care families vulnerable and creates additional stress for caregivers.

- “How to get custody if the parents won’t give it. It’s not cheap to go to court.”
- “Parent leaves the child at the doorstep, then comes back two weeks later.”
- “Forget the courts. They just gave us paperwork, then said we had the wrong paperwork. The papers cost \$200.”

Finding #7: Raising kinship children is a significant financial strain for kinship families even for those families with incomes significantly above the poverty level.

- “Have 7 grandkids that I have to buy clothing, school uniforms, school supplies. Financially it’s a big strain.”
- “Financial drain. In the last five years, we spent \$12,000 on dental care. Our grandchild has ADD. We get meds through EMPACT.”

Phase II - Planning Group Process

In September and October, a group of 18 providers came together to review the focus group data and create a plan to develop a system of care to provide more support for kinship care families. One of the first issues was that serving kinship care families would be better addressed on a regional basis, because many of the systems serving kinship care families extend beyond the borders of Tempe. With this in mind, the planning group adopted the following mission statement for the Kinship Care Partnership Project:

Mission for Kinship Care Partnership Project

Develop the infrastructure to promote and foster meaningful support and connection to the community for East Valley kinship care families.

TEMPE KINSHIP CARE FAMILIES (Continued)

The need to create a collaborative system of care for kinship families was highlighted further when the planning group listed all of the services just the participants in the room were responsible for providing or knew about. Nobody in this small group of providers already knew all of the services listed collectively by the group.

These desirable qualities were converted into four goals and concrete objectives for the next 18 months were developed for each goal (objectives not included here for space considerations) .

Goals for Kinship Care System

- Goal #1:** *Kinship care providers collaborate to create a central source of information and access to services for kinship families.*
- Goal #2:** *Create a friendly, culturally sensitive system of care that empowers and includes kinship families supporting other kinship families.*
- Goal #3:** *Increase awareness and educate providers, policymakers and the community about the value of, challenges faced by, and services available to kinship families.*
- Goal #4:** *Create a stable funding base to provide free/affordable services with measurable outcomes to kinship families.*

NEXT STEPS

- ▶ **Resource Guide** - A good deal of information on resources emerged during the Kinship Care Project study. Because so many families expressed a need for such information, a **Resource Guide for Kinship Care Families** is being prepared.
- ▶ **Who can take the lead?** - The Child Crisis Center-East Valley (CCC) has expressed interest in serving as the lead agency in creating a centralized, coordinated system of care for kinship families similar to the Kare Center in Tucson. The FRC already serves kinship families as well as other families and has recognized the emerging growth in the number of kinship families in the East Valley.
- ▶ **Public/Private Coalition**—If CCC does take on the job of lead agency, a lot of support will be needed to achieve the goals listed above. A collaborative group of funders, service providers and kinship care families themselves will need to come together to make the new center a reality.



The complete Kinship Care study is available at www.tempe.gov/tcc.

BOTTOM LINE

Action on special needs only seems to follow the identification of those needs, including even the giving of a name to the issue (e.g., domestic violence, homeless, working poor). The kinship care families are among those who are “picking up the pieces” of the mistakes of their OWN children and other relatives. They are often the recipients of the devastating consequences of the widespread use of drugs in our society. As we see them struggle with special problems of custody, school, money and emotional/physical damage - it is pretty clear they do need some special help!

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We were thrilled to learn that America's Promise - The Alliance for Youth has named Tempe as one of the **2007 100 Best Communities for Young People** for the second year in a row.

Founded in 2005 by General Colin Powell, America's Promise looks for communities that fulfill the organization's Five Promises: Caring Adults; Safe Places; Healthy Start; Effective Education; and Opportunities to Help Others.



Tempe's application for the 2007 award was possible because of the support of many partners, such as the City of Tempe, the Boys & Girls Club of the East Valley, KAET Channel 8, the Tempe Elementary School District and the Mountain Park Health Clinic and TCC, among others.

Tempe earned the award, in part, because of the efforts of our Tempe/Kyrene Communities In Schools (CIS) which opened nine family resource centers in high-poverty elementary schools, with the aim of supporting parents as they take part in their children's education. Other programs that helped single out Tempe for this honor include: the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission, City of Tempe's adaptive recreation program to serve children with disabilities, an advisory committee of local businesses that hire special education students for after-school jobs; the Tempe Public Library's new Experience Corps project, which pairs retirees with students for tutoring; and the first community health clinic serving low-income residents. CONGRATULATIONS!

Katherine Hanley

YOUTH SHOWCASE

Tempe Youth Showcase Premieres April 15 -

Young people from all across the Valley will perform at the Celebrity Theatre on April 15 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the first ever Tempe Youth Showcase. Communities In Schools has brought together a group of teens to empower them to create an event which highlights the talents of their peers while benefiting youth programs in Tempe. This young production team has been learning team building skills, public relations, marketing, graphic design, stage production and many other skills from Tempe area professionals who have donated their time to this project.

Featured performers include drummer *Sean Busch* (see photo on the right the *Anonymous Dance Family*, *Kyrene de las Brisas Mallet Masters*, an awesome harmonica player, several phenomenal singers and much more. Admission is free. Donations will be accepted at the door.



The poverty thresholds in 2004 ranged from \$9,060 (1 person age 65+) to \$36,520 (family of 9 or more). [Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States U.S. Census Bureau 2004](#)



EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT INITIATIVE (EITC)

Business” is *good* this year at the Tempe EITC Tax Super Site! As of the Spring Break, **482** free returns have been prepared by our Tempe/Guadalupe Volunteers In Tax Assistance (VITA), on pace for a record number of returns by the end of tax preparation on April 14.

	Total re- turns	Total EIC	Total Child Tax Credit	Total Educ Tax Credit	Total Refund Amt
TSCU	410	\$203,566	\$177,133	\$25,285	\$587,588
Guadalupe	72	\$61,953	\$35,053	\$1,909	\$142,449
TOTAL	482	\$265,519	\$212,186	\$27,194	\$730,037

This fifth year of the EITC Initiative marked the first time for one Tempe “super site” for tax preparation, at Tempe Schools Credit Union (TSCU). Thanks to the added support of TSCU through their CFO **Margaret Hunnicutt** (see photo to the right), superior technical support was provided through TSCU staff, along with faster and more consistent screening/quality review and more computers and space for volunteers to do their work of helping lower income people maximize their tax credits and refunds.

Mainstay for the EITC Initiative has been **Diane Bennett** (see photo to the right) who has coordinated, guided and raised funds since its beginning in 2003 as a collaborative effort of TCC, the City of Tempe and the Town of Guadalupe.

There has been an increased emphasis on helping families use their refunds for *asset accumulation*, especially toward home buying. See the following article on services available from Newtown.



Tax Super Site Coordinator and TCC Board Member **Margaret Hunnicutt**



TCC Director Kate Hanley, EITC Project Director Diane Bennett and VITA volunteer Misty Everett

NEWTOWN CDC'S HOMEBUYER EDUCATION

Newtown Community Development Corporation is offering **Homebuyer Education Classes** on the third Saturday of each month through November 2007. The classes are all held at Hatton Hall from 8 am to 5 pm. TCC is partnering with Newtown as part of the Earned Income Tax Credit Initiative toward helping low income families build wealth.



Students who complete the FREE 8-hour workshop receive a certificate that enables them to take part in special down payment assistance programs across the state, not just in Tempe.

Advantages of homebuyer education include: 1) building stronger neighborhoods by increasing home-ownership rates; 2) teaches basic financial management; 3) teaches about the home buying process; 3) Helps households make wise consumer choices ; 4) builds trust with customers in the mortgage lending process; 5) helps consumers access legitimate, affordable financing; 6) helps families to become successful long-term owners; 7) creates more mortgage-ready buyers; 8) reduces delinquencies and defaults; 9) improves borrowers overall credit health.

Contact **Jennifer Quillin** at Newtown for more information at 480-517-1589 or email jennifer@newtowncdc.org



GOOD NEWS

EMPTY BOWLS

The 6th Annual Tempe Empty Bowls, held over



TCC staff members Cheryl Hornyman and Jayson Matthews

February 23 and 24, was a huge success, raising over \$13,000 to be donated to the United Food Bank's Kids Café program benefiting Tempe school children. The event was sponsored by City of Tempe, Whole Foods Market, The Edge 103.9, SRP, Motorola and Tempe Union High School.

In spite of the looming threat of rain, Friday's event at 6th Street Park brought out record numbers of supporters. Tempe music icon, Walt Richardson was on hand to entertain the crowd on Friday, with his talented renditions of the recognizable hits of artists like Cat Stevens, Bill Withers and Bob Marley.

Saturday's event, held at Tempe Town Lake's Beach Park, started with the arrival of Desert Vista High School's "Bowl Patrol", a group of students who not only provided over 300 bowls for the event, but paraded around the lake, selling bowls along the way. Hundreds of people turned out to purchase a hand-crafted bowl and enjoy a light lunch of soup and bread.

For additional information on Tempe Empty Bowls or to find out how you can assist with next year's event, please contact Cheryl Hornyman at 480-858-2310 or email Cheryl_hornyman@Tempe.gov.

CINDERELLA AFFAIR



The Cinderella Affair, with help from the East Valley Women's League and the City of Tempe, hosted another successful prom dress give away at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center on March 30th and 31st, outfitting nearly 300 young women for their high school proms (see photo, above). Students came from all over Arizona to attend this annual event, including Prescott, Eloy, and Florence!

Throughout the year over 100 volunteers work to put this special event together, conducting collection drives, sorting and hanging donated dresses, and seeking out needed supplies. Once the big weekend arrives, many of the same volunteers serve as personal shoppers, helping the girls in their hunt for that perfect prom attire! A group of volunteer seamstresses from the Pyle Center known as the Needleweilders were on hand to do on the spot alterations for those whose straps were a little too long or whose legs weren't quite long enough.

One mother summed the event up quite nicely with the following note:

"It was wonderful to see a roomful of girls from all walks of life trying on many beautiful gowns. The women volunteers were truly fairy godmothers not only dressing the girls from head to toe, but even more so giving them warm uplifting positive affirmations throughout the event -- something which some of these girls may never get. I am so thankful for all the people who gave to make these girls' dreams come true."

SPRING 2007 CALENDAR

APRIL	MAY	JUNE
4 TCC Board Meeting 7&14 EITC Tax Preparation 8 Easter Sunday 15 Tempe Youth Showcase 25 East Valley Resource Committee (EVRC) Meeting (Chandler) 24 TCC Executive Committee Meeting 26 Mayor's Disability Awards 27 CIS Recognition Breakfast	2 TCC Volunteer Reception 4&5 TCC Board Retreat 11 Graduation Week 23 East Valley Resource Coalition (EVRC) Meeting (Tempe) 28 Memorial Day (TCC Office Closed) 29 TCC Executive Committee Meeting	6 TCC Board Meeting 27 East Valley Resource Committee (EVRC) Meeting (Mesa)
<i>For confirmation and further details of meetings and events listed above, please call (480) 858-2300</i>		



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